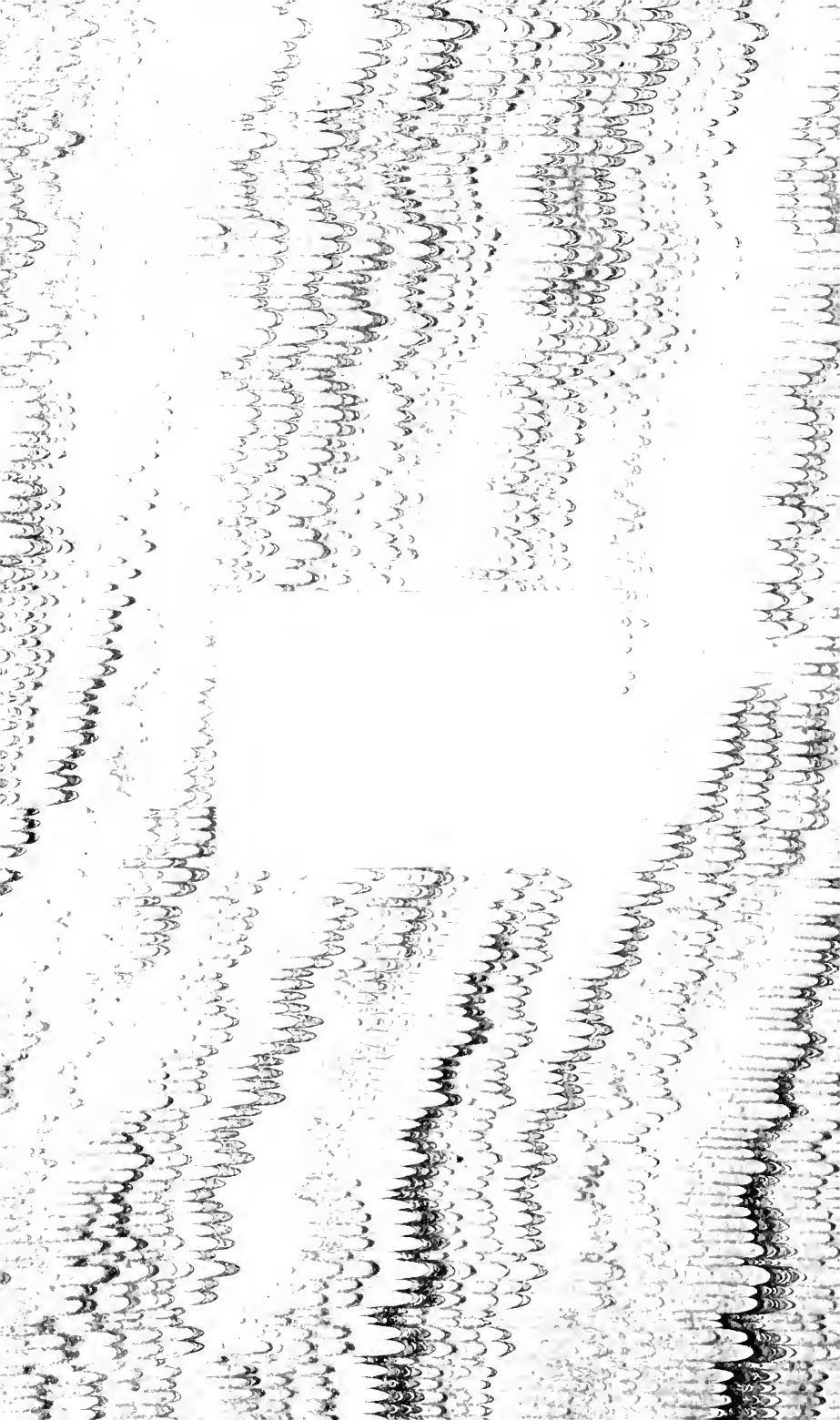


E 286

.B74

1820

Copy 1



ORATION

DELIVERED

AT THE REQUEST OF THE SELECTMEN OF THE
TOWN OF BOSTON,

ON THE

ANNIVERSARY

OF

AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE.

IN THE YEAR

1820.

BY THEODORE LYMAN, JUN.

BOSTON.

PRINTED BY J. T. BUCKINGHAM,

No. 17, Cornhill.

7526
1874
1820

VOTE OF THE TOWN.

~~~~~

At a meeting of the freeholders and other inhabitants of the town of BOSTON, assembled at Faneuil Hall, on Tuesday, the 4th day of July, A. D. 1820, at 9 o'clock, A. M. and then adjourned to the Old South Church,

VOTED, That the Selectmen be, and hereby are, appointed a committee, to wait on THEODORE LYMAN, jun'r. Esq. in the name of the town, and thank him for the elegant and spirited Oration, this day delivered by him at the request of the town, upon the Anniversary of American Independence, in which were considered the feelings, manners, and principles, which produced that great national event, and the important and happy effects, general and domestic, which have already, or will forever, flow from that auspicious epoch ; and to request of him a copy for the press.

Attest,

THOMAS CLARK, Town Clerk.

## ORATION.



This year, fellow-citizens, is one of the first years since the resignation of General Washington in 1797, when all the inhabitants of this town have professed a political attachment to the President of the United States ; it is also one of the first years since the adoption of the Federal Constitution, when it would be difficult to ascertain the exact differences of state or town parties of the present time, or to foresee those which may hereafter exist. And the gentlemen, who have thought fit to assign to me the duty of speaking the address customary on this occasion, have been selected by their fellow-citizens, with a slight inequality as to number, from those two celebrated parties, which formerly embittered much of your domestic intercourse, and which have never failed to manifest the political zeal and consistency that have always distinguished this town.—Above all, before another anniversary of

your independence again returns, the 200th year will be completed since your forefathers landed at Plymouth. I mention this as another great circumstance of harmony and thanksgiving, and it cannot be remarked with too much admiration and gratitude, that in less than two hundred years New-England, first settled by those illustrious puritans, has herself become an old country and annually sends forth her children not to struggle on coasts hard and forbidding like her own, but to settle the richest portions of this vast continent : but what is still more extraordinary, New-England finds herself upon the approach of this 200th year happier, freer, and better united in feeling and council than in any one year which has gone before it. And upon this birth day of your independence may I not speak of the birth day of this part of the nation with exultation to men, who have been truly republicans for two hundred years, whose forefathers manifested as pure and steady and passionate love of liberty in the 17th and 18th centuries as you have done in the 19th.—It is in vain to say that your liberty or your republican institutions began on the 4th July 1776. That blessed day did you no other good than to make you independent as a nation. But those institutions began on the 31st day of December 1620, that day, when those stout hearted pilgrims first set up their frail tabernacle in

the wilderness, little divining that hereafter sermons should be preached, and orations delivered. and odes sung to the praise of that event, and that a great people, abounding in all the luxuries of life and acquainted with the history of all antiquity, should go and visit that bleak and inhospitable rock, as the traveller visits an ancient valley in the old world consecrated by tradition as the spot, where the founders of a great empire were nursed by a wild beast of the forest.

It is another good sign of the present year that excitement has ceased from without as well as from within. The faithful ship still passes as safely and frequently across the Atlantic, her sides are still beaten by gales, and her deck is still watched in long and dangerous nights by the same bold and enterprising mariners; but she now sails silently and unheeded into your harbours, and the house top is no longer crowded to hear, if there be more battles of Marengo, Austerlitz, Leipsic or Waterloo. True it is, the day of Bulletins, Cossacks, Campaigns, Marshals and Bivouacs is passed, and that character bestowed with such admirable precision upon the Athenians ceases to be peculiar to you. "For all the Athenians and strangers which were there, spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell or hear something new."

But here I come to a subject which is far from being in harmony with the other delightful recollections and circumstances of this day. It is due to the early and keen enmity which your ancestors, particularly in this town, always manifested to slavery ; it is due to your characters, equally as Christians, men and as republicans, and, if I may say it with becoming respect, it is due to my own feelings, that I should speak of this subject with earnestness and solemnity. More especially, as it will seem vain and desperate in all future ages, even the most remote, to act or speak for liberty or emancipation, when the Americans, the free-st people in the most enlightened age of the world, have consented to spread slavery over their country without a limit as to time or in reality as to space ; in an age, too, when the most despotic governments of Europe have joined in this holy league against slavery, and men, alike renowned for talents, learning and religion have within a short time come out of a contest, which, with one exception, has no parallel for length and violence in the political history of Great Britain, and have obtained a vote in the British parliament, which, I am bold to say, is not surpassed as to its good consequences to humanity by any vote in the political history of any country. Jews and Romans bestowed at certain intervals portions of liberty upon their slaves :—but

Americans, wiser, freer and more enlightened, who inscribe upon the tablets of their laws, the freedom and equality of man, as the first and main axiom of the declaration of their independence and of their state governments, and who declare that the birth right can never be forfeited but by offences against society, these republicans have in a solemn law scoffed at all liberty and equality, and at the birth of every man passed an attainder upon his blood of perpetual toil and servitude. I speak not this in reproach to man or men. The opinions and consciences of legislators ought to be as independent and sacred as the opinions and consciences of constituents. But it has fallen to my lot to record on this occasion, sacred to the emancipation of man and to every hope that good men feel for the safety and prosperity of their country, that disastrous vote of Congress, which has put in eternal jeopardy the tranquillity and security of the most fertile part of our country.—Is it nothing that there shall live hereafter millions of people in those vast and fruitful regions, where will be found cities like Palmyra and Nineveh, and when the rivers Mississippi and Missouri shall be more famous than those great rivers the Tigris and the Euphrates? Is it nothing that those plains, separated by high mountains and a great extent of territory from the white population of the Atlantic States, shall be

covered with vast multitudes acquainted from their childhood only with bondage and oppression. Indeed, those must be heedless and indifferent, who are not filled with dismay at the thought of the long days of misery and bloodshed, which, perhaps, within a few months have been laid up in store for these highly favoured regions. It may not be that the trumpet of this jubilee shall always sound thus joyfully throughout the land. It may not be that the servile wars, so frequent and well known among the ancient nations, shall never be renewed in this.— But those nations were emphatically military and were constantly and alike girt for foreign battle as well as for the foe within their own borders. And it may not be that the speedy extermination almost to the last man and child of a powerful and wealthy population in one of the largest and most fertile islands of the ocean shall be the only examples of terrible vengeance on the records of these centuries, over which the friend of man is called to lament. Indeed, you may still see upon your own hospitable shores a few of those unhappy men, barely escaping with their lives in that dreadful moment, and now condemned to wretchedness, poverty, and long wanderings in foreign lands. Indeed, I tremble for my country, says Mr. Jefferson in one of the most eloquent passages in our language, “I tremble for my country, when I reflect



that God is just, that his justice cannot sleep forever, that considering numbers and natural means only an exchange of situation is among possible events. The Almighty has no attribute, which can take side with us in such a contest." Here then in this curse and abomination of slavery, here is your dread and wo. You have no cause to fear the invasion of foreign enemies. There are already along your shores the graves, bearing the names and devices of foreign nations, of gallant men enough to serve as an eternal warning to all, who shall hereafter attempt to set a desperate foot on your soil. You have still less cause to fear for the safety of the Union. Every year has made this nation freer, more independent and better united. There is every year less discord in your national councils, less distrust in the success of national measures, and I ask those, who may look with a misgiving eye upon this observation, to read the history of their country from the time Mr. Hamilton begun to consolidate the national debt to the peace of Ghent in 1815. The laws are every year better understood and administered, and that remnant of colonial disposition and dependence, that even for many years after the emancipation led this people to regard European nations as friends and protectors, is now utterly absorbed by a steady and genuine patriotism. Not that you should consult with states-

men either from the north or south, whose opinions or interests may for a moment have been shocked or defeated, but go out and consult with the people both from the north and south, and I believe, that I venture little in saying, that whoever speaks after me on this occasion, will have abundant cause to thank Heaven, that the republic is still great, uncorrupted and unshaken. You, then, are as deeply concerned in the forebodings, which it has been impossible to repress on the present occasion, as the individuals among whom they may hereafter be accomplished. Those individuals are your countrymen, most of the desolation and many of the battles of the revolutionary war took place among them.—Among them, too, is the tomb of your Washington, and they, too, are alike guiltless with yourselves of having first brought the curse of slavery on the nation. There are few nations in the old world, who have not sent hither some portion of their population and some tincture of their institutions, whether good or bad; still no pestilent thing, no truly permanent evil remains upon the land but slavery.\*

\* The Colonists are by the law of nature free born, as indeed all men are, white or black. No better reason can be given for enslaving those of any colour, than such as Baron Montesquieu has humorously given as the foundation of that cruel slavery exercised over the poor Ethiopians; which threatens one day to reduce both Europe and America to the ignorance and barbarity of the darkest ages. Does it follow that it is right to enslave a man because he is black? Will short

But, on the other hand, if the nation has not succeeded in subduing all its prejudices, it is delightful to reflect upon the conquest you have made over the presages and prejudices of the old world. It is delightful, that you should no longer be beset and oppressed with the opinions of European politicians as to the duration of the republic. You need no longer go and ask Dr. Price, if a restless and ambitious state will finally usurp all the powers and privileges of the Union, or M. Mirabeau if the society of Cincinnati will be a patrician order, a "military noblesse," assuming to itself the estates and digni-

curled hair like wool instead of christian hair, as it is called by those whose hearts are as hard as the nether millstone, help the argument? Can any logical inference be drawn in favour of slavery from a flat nose or a long or a short face? Nothing better can be said in favour of a trade, that it is the most shocking violation of the law of nature, has a direct tendency to diminish the idea of the inestimable value of liberty, and makes every dealer in it a tyrant, from the director of an African company to the petty chapman in needles and pins on the unhappy coast. It is a clear truth, that those who every day barter away other men's liberty will soon care little for their own. To this cause must be imputed that ferocity, cruelty and brutal barbarity that has long marked the general character of the sugar islanders. They can in general form no idea of government, but that which in person or by an overseer, the joint and several proper representative of a Creole and of the d——l, is exercised over ten thousand of their fellow men, born with the same right to freedom, and the sweet enjoyments of liberty and life as their unrelenting task masters, the overseers and planters."

*The Rights of the British Colonists asserted and proved, by James Otis,—p. 43, &c. Boston, New England, 1764.*

ties of the nation. It was useful and honourable at the time, that a defence of your constitution should have been prepared and sent forth to the nations, but even if other means of defence and those, too, of a far different kind did not now abound, I should be glad to know if the whole world can bring forth a more satisfactory defence of the constitution, and a more beautiful illustration of the republican scheme, than the example of the great man, to whom I have just alluded. What more can be wanting to show that your rulers are republicans, than the extraordinary fact, that of the four men once standing at the head of the nation, three of them still live in a singular privacy and retirement, coveting neither honour nor influence in town or country, and possessing neither office, title, or pension? Who asks now, if the experiment of a republic has been made? Those, who condescend to notice you even in foreign lands, already search for other terms of reproach, and no longer exulting in the speedy breaking asunder of the federal Union, content themselves, forsooth, with the sorry rebuke, that the Americans have no poets, and that they have discovered no constellations. Who asks now if this people has become a nation? Let such go to those famous seas, that wash the shores, where stood the celebrated and misnamed republics of antiquity. There they will find lofty ships of war of the most beautiful construction bearing the flag of a people, whose

country lies 3000 miles beyond any shore even known to the inhabitants of those republics. Will it not affect with wonder and delight the brilliant imaginations of the people, who now dwell in those regions, that there sail upon their seas, that there come into their harbours those magnificent vessels, visited, as they have been, by the kings and emperors of the ancient dynasties of the earth—one of them bearing the name of the saviour of his country and the father of the republic,—and the other bearing the name of the greatest philosopher of the new and western world. Surely it will affect those imaginations with a double wonder and delight to behold that ship, which the nation has just sent forth—the mightiest vessel now floating on the ocean—bearing too the name of him, who discovered a world—and sailing too for that sea upon the shore of which he was born.—Truly, this is a homage worthy of Columbus, and justly sent by a nation of 10,000,000 of inhabitants in little more than 300 years after their country was first seen by a European eye. On the other hand fearless and indefatigable men have penetrated across vast deserts and over dangerous mountains to that broad ocean, which washes the two great continents of the oldest and newest world, and have thus approached by land those countries of Asia, which the vast genius of Columbus taught him to do by water. At the Mandan villages upon the banks of one of the great

rivers of that wilderness, farther removed from the spot, where you are now assembled, than half the breadth of that great ocean which your ancestors crossed, and, again, as far removed from that other great ocean, which also serves to divide the world, there your hardy and intrepid countrymen have fixed and secured a new boundary to the republic; like the Roman legions, sent forth to encamp among the barbarians, whether of Pict or Parthian, and to cause the eagle to be respected at the uttermost limit of the empire. If such revolutions shall take place in this country as have taken place in Europe, there may be no other way hereafter of designating the spot of an American encampment but by a few coins of the republic or broken instruments of war found buried and wasting in the earth.

And shall it be of no account to mention here, that the American flag has been unfurled on the plain of Marathon, under that fair and pure sky of Greece? Shall it be of no account to say, that a frigate, bearing the name of the nation, has cast anchor in the Piræus, the harbour of Athens, and the first clear and gentle waves, that came against that ship, had passed but a few moments before over a spot, where was won the greatest naval victory in in the cause of freedom? From the quarter deck of that ship, your countrymen could see those splendid ruins, still as fair and beautiful as the day when the marble was drawn from the quarry, and the

wonderful work of a small city, placed in a narrow district and known by a proverb for its sterility for more than 3000 years. There may have been those among them, who saw in that sight one more of the numerous forerunners of that destiny, which may alike await you. The laws of the Medes and Persians have changed. Of many of those mighty cities, whose renown once filled the world and to whose marts merchants came from the most distant parts of the earth, there now exists scarcely any remnant beyond a few coarse bricks marked with mysterious characters ; and on the contrary, so unaccountable is the history of the revolutions of man, that there are found in the deserts of the East vast fabricks, constructed with a power and an art beyond the comprehension of modern architects, fabricks as lasting and unchanged as the deserts upon which they stand, and whose builders and objects are as unknown as the nations that have once peopled those deserts. Is there then nothing to save you ? Shall all this virtue, liberty and intelligence perish from the face of the earth, depart as a scroll, when it is rolled together ? Little truly would it delight and profit the traveller, if in every fallen wall and shattered column he only saw another type of the condition of his distant and beloved country. Yes ! my friends, let us believe that in your religion safety may be found for your republican insti-

tutions. Not one of those nations, that embraced christianity, has yet disappeared like the nations that existed before them, and only one still remains in the abject and deplorable condition in which it was at the time that christianity was revealed. Let us believe, too, that another safeguard may be found in the purity and peculiarity of your domestic habits—habits unknown to the ancient nations. The duties and relations of man and wife, of parents and children, and that singular and hallowed attachment, which every man in this country has to his home and fireside, are the best pledges, far better than domestic gods or the smoked images of ancestors, put up in the halls of your houses, that you will always love with a pure and sincere love the country in which you are born, and the rulers you have appointed to rule over you,

It is not unbecoming, and I trust, that it will not be without its good purpose to allude here to a most conspicuous and melancholy departure from those moral laws, which you account of such high value and import. It is not unbecoming, inasmuch as that liberty, which you now enjoy and which you are now assembled to celebrate, received its birth and chief and constant support from the religious tenets and conduct of your ancestors. Considering then the high moral and religious character in which you take so just a pride, it becomes the duty of those, who address you on this occasion,



to hold out to your rebuke and indignation every public deviation from that morality and religion, as well as every setting at nought the political rights of the citizens. Full well do I know, that if it had been left to you to choose the spot, where the gallant man, to whom I have just alluded should fall, you would not have chosen a sod of his native soil; nor would you have chosen a spot, where their death shots could be heard in the halls of the legislators of the republic; much less would you have chosen, that the hand, which gave the death-wound, should have been the hand of a countryman and comrade in arms. Better would it have been, if that precious blood had been poured out on the broad deck of his ship, an offering to his country, and not upon the fair pure surface of his native land, an offering to private resentment. Better would it have been, if that exalted spirit had fled away in the midst of contagion and disease—if twice in the same year, the messenger of death had come up and said to you, again another of your chosen children has quailed under the pestilence of a distant climate, and again a second tomb is abandoned to the rude and uncertain care of strangers in a foreign land. Above all, far better would it have been, if the great and salutary example, now on the records of your navy, had been properly heeded. If at this time we could say to you, another of those brave men, alike high in rank and alike known by brill-

iant successes over the enemy, had publicly and in the presence of an American fleet withheld himself from submitting to that practice, which has, within a few years, deprived this country of one of its most eminent statesmen and one of its most distinguished officers.

In the last place, it cannot be concealed, that a considerable uncertainty has at last settled upon the true interests of this country. The repose and poverty of Europe now operate like a great and fatal embargo upon your commerce, and the wealth which that commerce has been preparing the last thirty years, is now partly absorbed in projects for domestic manufactures. Few can have been so heedless and indifferent as to have overlooked the rapid and unforeseen authority, which that branch of wealth has acquired in the national councils and in the breasts of the citizens. It would not be easy to recount to you the vast and continued efforts made, more especially in the middle states, for the protection of manufactures, but no one can have passed by without solemn notice the vote, recently given in Congress on the subject of the Tariff bill. Still it will avail little to pass Tariff bills, if the present signs in Europe forebode more wars and commotions, when American wealth and enterprize will go back to commerce, and American commerce will be as widely spread and as productive as it was in the year 1808. Agriculture, too, has made a progress equally great, and successful. Agricul-

tural societies are now established on the Berkshire plan, if I am rightly informed, in every county of New England, except in the state of Rhode Island—in every county of the state of New York, and much has been done for the same good purpose in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, North and South Carolina, Kentucky, Ohio, and even in the new state of Illinois. Here then is another instance putting to shame the notions of the economists. In this America has but followed the splendid examples of those rich countries of Italy and England, and by the extent and success of her commerce she has prepared funds for the establishment of manufactures and the perfection of agriculture. The present years, therefore, abound in change as to the commercial interests of this country. Embargoes and wars checked but for a time the progress of one branch of industry, but the present feelings of the people and the disposition of the popular and powerful limb of the government appear to be preparing to set in a totally opposite course and vocation a large portion of the commercial capital, enterprise, and intelligence of the nation. In the mean time it becomes you to watch patiently and steadily in the porch till the waters shall be stirred, and to recommend to your legislators to reflect well, before they consent to a measure, which will bring about the decline of your commerce and the decay and downfall of your navy.

These years too, appear to abound in change as to the political state of Europe. It has not been sufficient that the Scythian, who never comes down into Europe, but when an empire is to be overthrown, and who seems to be kept in the north by the hand of God, as an angel of retribution, to be brought forth at the interval of ages in order to repress the ambition of individuals and to restore the equality of nations; it has not been sufficient that he has gone back to those remote, unknown, and unbounded steppes beyond the Borysthenes and the wall of China--it has not been sufficient to chain the giant to the rock of St. Helena. The spirit of reformation is in the people, and that mighty and wonderful man came up but as a great and strong instrument to hasten along and to render more terrible and effectual that miraculous revolution, of which the end and the meaning seem at last to be in full accomplishment and developement. France, Bavaria, Spain and several of the small states of Germany have already received free constitutions, and, I trust, that every one, who shall come up here successively to address you, will have other countries to enumerate thus rescued from bad governments, till at last that spirit of independence and reformation, which begun in America, shall have spread peaceably and permanently throughout the christian and civilized world.





















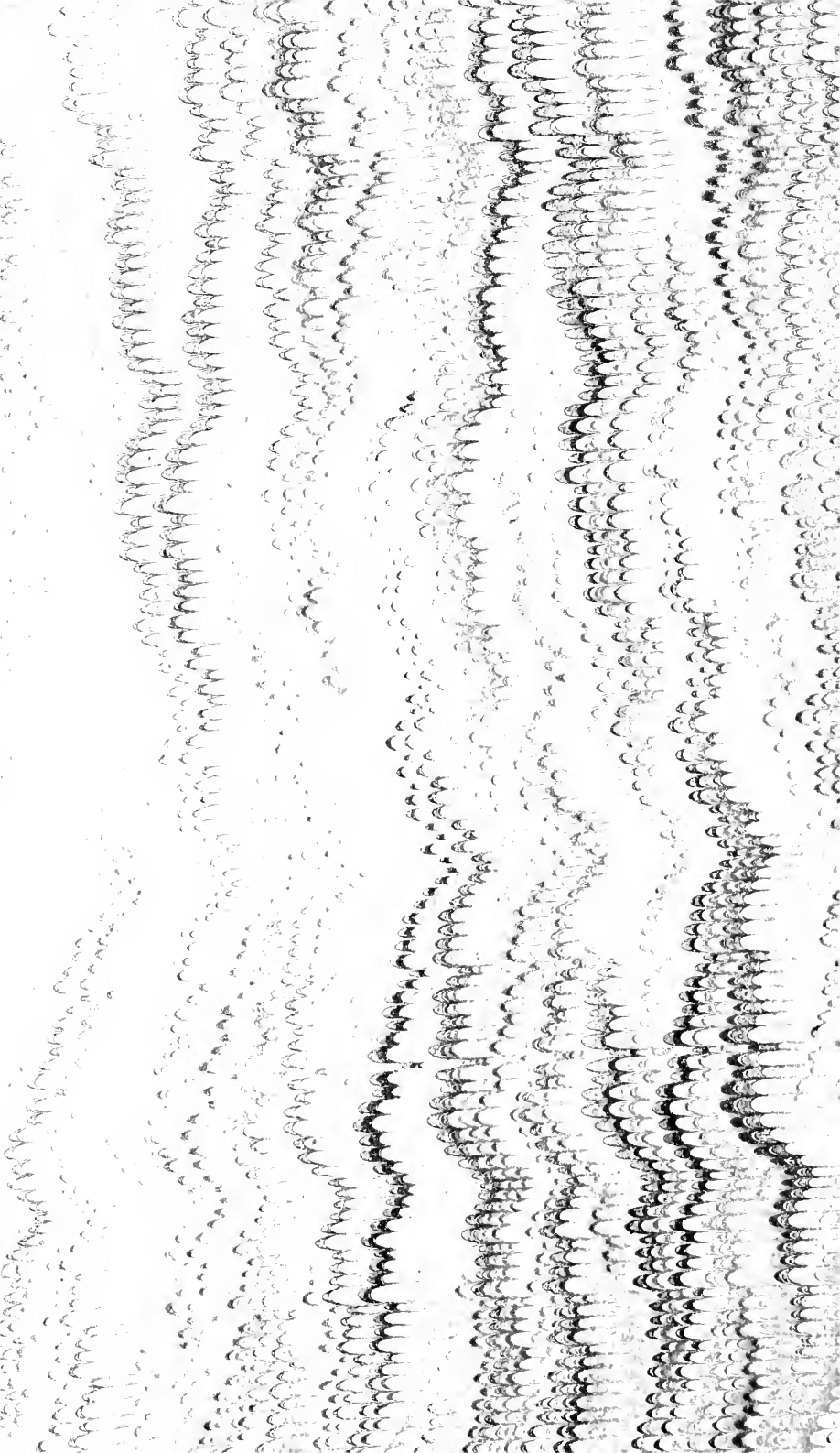


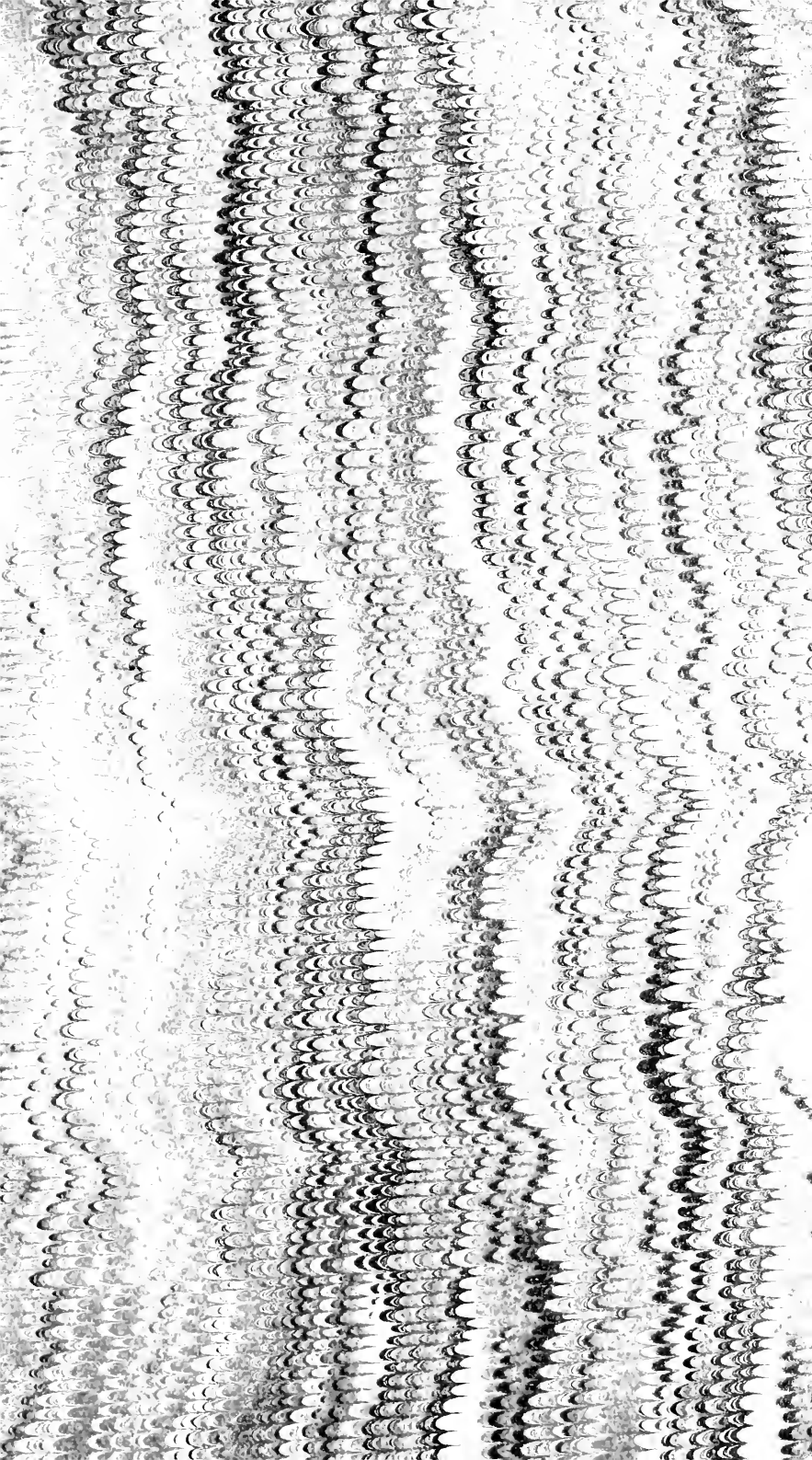




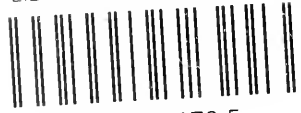








LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 011 801 672 5